

Ledbury Neighbourhood Development Plan 2021-2031

Issues and options report

May 2021

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Ledbury Neighbourhood Development Plan

Introduction

Ledbury Town Council is undertaking a limited revision of the Ledbury Neighbourhood Development Plan (NDP) which addresses several matters upon which there was insufficient evidence or clarity to support inclusion in the first NDP. These primarily involve the identification of a settlement boundary for the town's built-up area, the provision of more employment land, safeguarding local green space and the inclusion of a range of design matters.

Additionally, several planning permissions granted while the plan was being prepared or subsequently have added pressures upon facilities; the need for more playing fields being one of the most notable. In a revision there are limits on how much the original NDP can be changed. Decisions have had to be made on the issues which it includes and those which will be deferred for future editions. A comprehensive review will be undertaken alongside the review of Herefordshire Local Plan Core Strategy (The Core Strategy) that will set out requirements beyond the current local plan period of 2011 to 2031 and which is projected to be adopted in mid-2024.

The current Core Strategy contains a range of strategic or 'high level' policies that the NDP must comply with where they are applicable. They include two general locations where notable change should take place – land to the south of Little Marcle Road to provide employment to match housing growth and land to the north of the Viaduct and railway line to be developed for housing and employment. The Core Strategy also supports efforts to maintain and enhance the vitality and viability of the town centre. This document sets out the main issues that the NDP intends to cover so that the community can express its views upon any revisions before the Town Council finalises its draft plan. The community will be consulted again when that draft plan (referred to as the 'Reg 14' version) has been prepared. Where possible this current document presents some options upon which residents may wish to express a preference. The key issues for the review are:

- Defining a settlement boundary around the town within which development to meet identified needs can take place, to protect the character of the town, and to prevent unrestricted growth into the countryside.
- Accommodating the recreational needs of the town and its surrounding area, especially meeting the shortage of football playing fields.
- Retaining the ability to accommodate the Core Strategy requirement for 12 hectares of employment land to the south of Little Marcle Road.
- The need to improve east-bound platform access to Ledbury Railway Station, thereby promoting this more sustainable travel option.
- Supporting the town centre, including enabling it to accommodate improved health and other community services.
- Retaining and enhancing green space (green infrastructure) within and surrounding the town for both the community and wildlife.
- Promoting good design in its many forms in the built environment.

1. Defining a Settlement Boundary

- 1.1 Further work was considered necessary on the NDP if it was to include a settlement boundary. There are both advantages and disadvantages to defining a settlement boundary. The principal benefits are considered to be that it provides greater clarity and

certainty about where most forms of development might take place; it protects the countryside and important landscapes; enables sites to be brought forward for development through consultation with the community rather than relying on windfall sites brought forward by others, and is a well understood and accepted planning tool.

Disadvantages include that it can lead to 'cramming' inside the boundary; potentially increases land values; and leads to accusations of being a crude and inflexible approach. On balance, it is considered that a settlement boundary should be defined. Options might be influenced by how it is proposed development pressures should be accommodated. It is emphasised that currently the town has met and exceeded the required level of housing growth through policies in the Core Strategy and planning permissions and consequently this interim review does not propose any new housing sites. That should await the fuller review when the updated Core Strategy is rolled forward.

1.2 Options that are presented for consideration are:

Option A: Not to define a settlement boundary but rely simply upon site allocations

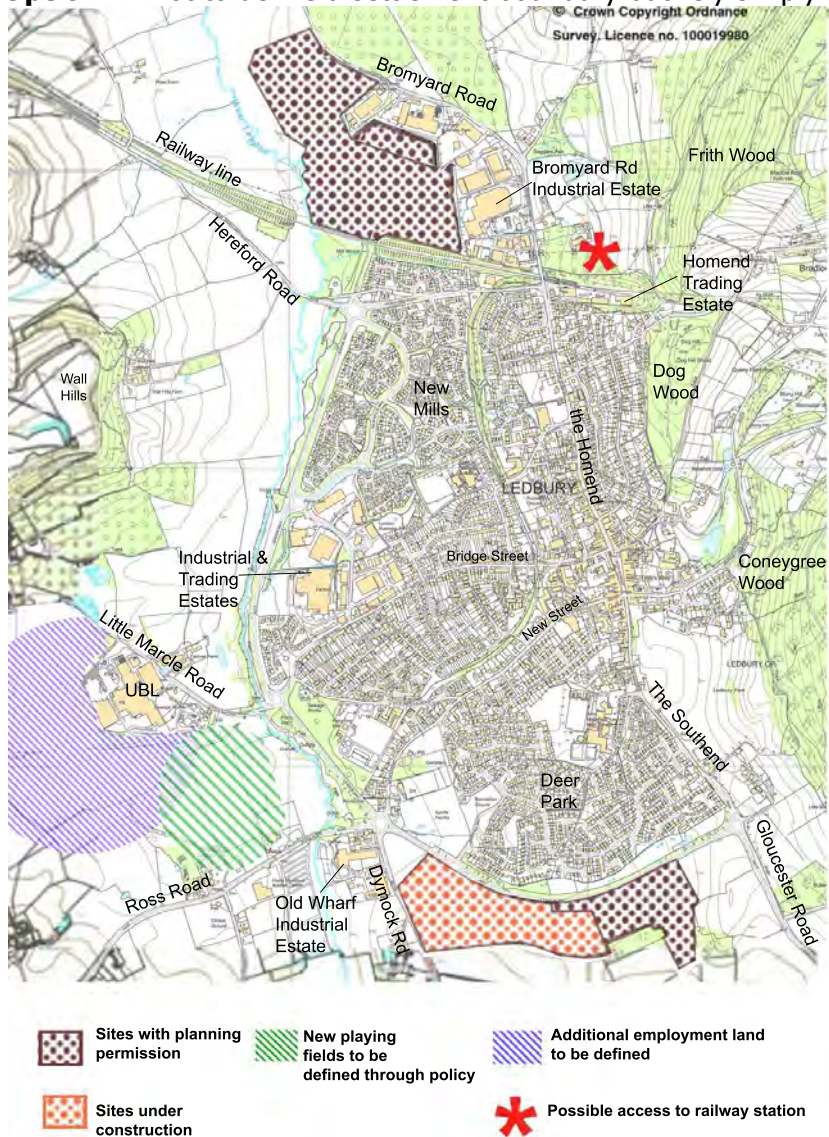


Figure 1: Option A – No Settlement Boundary (based on current NDP policies paper)

comprising those undeveloped housing sites with planning permission, the Core Strategy Strategic Housing site, and proposals for new land uses identified by other studies.

Advantages: Offers flexibility in planning; avoids development being crammed within a settlement boundary; acts as a brake on land values.

Disadvantages: Provides no certainty to landowners, developers and the community as to where development is likely to be acceptable or not; provides less community control over development and less protection of the countryside.

Option B: To utilise the former Herefordshire UDP boundary for the town, adding extensions to incorporate recent developments and sites with planning permission upon its edge.

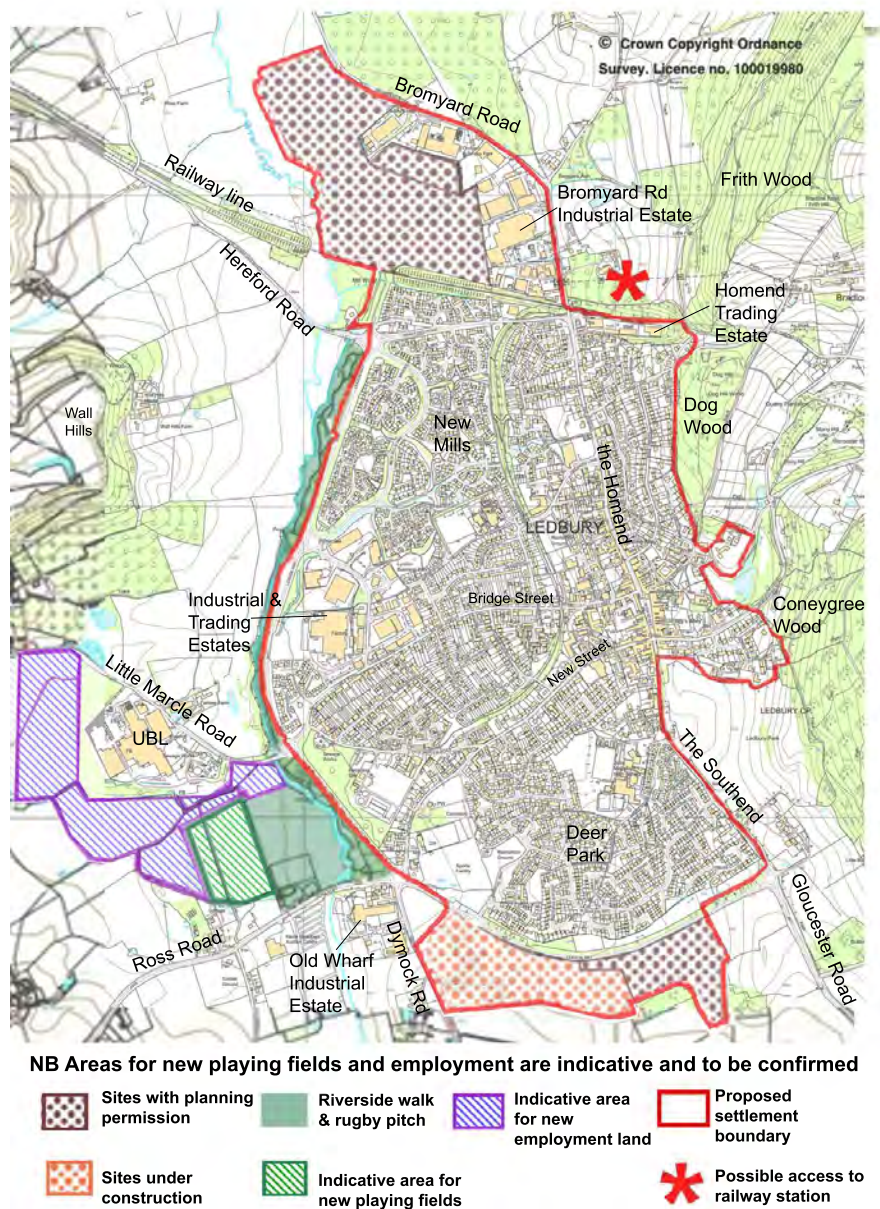


Figure 2: Option B – Settlement Boundary based on previous draft NDP submission removed at examination, but with an extension for land recently granted planning permissions.

Advantages: Implies that development will be limited by the boundary of the existing built area, which has been determined over time by topography, the AONB and River Leadon.

Disadvantages: Developers have been successful in challenging this boundary, notably in new housing developments south of Leadon Way. They continue to seek planning permission outside the UDP boundary, for example off Dymock road.

Option C: To extend the settlement boundary defined above westwards to incorporate the Riverside Park, an area to be allocated for recreation and areas for employment to the south of Little Marcle Road.

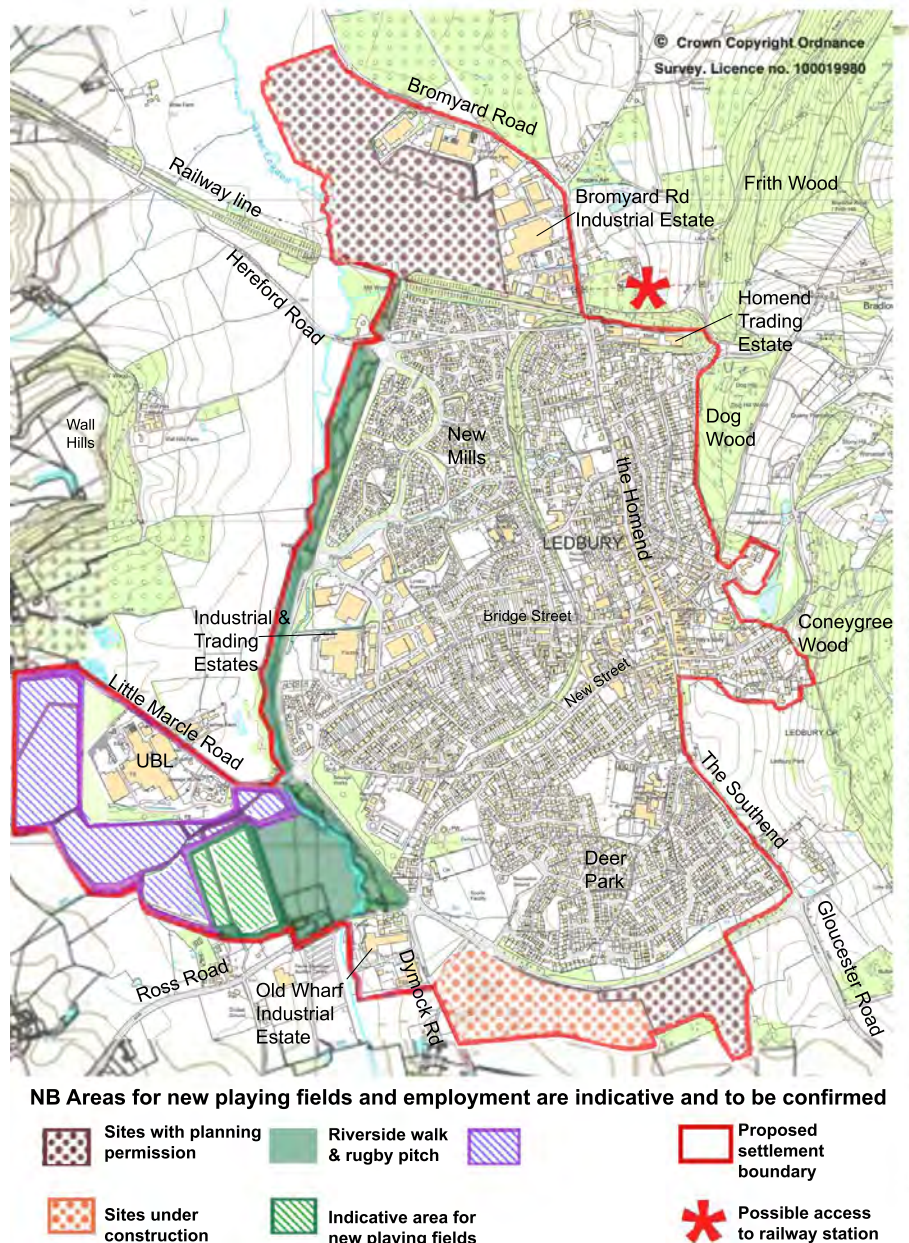


Figure 3: Option C – Settlement Boundary to include committed sites and allocations for employment, playing fields and Riverside Walk.

Advantages: This settlement boundary respects the constraints of topography, the AONB and River Leadon, with extensions to the west to protect the Riverside Park and to the

south-west to meet Ledbury’s present and future needs for recreation and employment land. It gives greater certainty to landowners, developers and community over where building is likely to be acceptable and where it is not. It will also help ensure a plan-led and controlled approach and protect the countryside from unnecessary development. In this respect, it is important that proposals are included to protect the green infrastructure network around the town, as outlined later in the paper.

Disadvantages: Extends the boundaries to the south-west of Ledbury that might potentially lead to additional pressures for development in that direction. Reduces flexibility and opportunities for landowners and developers.

- 1.3 Given that a settlement boundary is the prime objective of this NDP revision, Ledbury Town Council believes that Option 3 gives greatest certainty and protection. Furthermore, this option provides for a number of other development needs within the boundary which the Town Council consider should be addressed in the revised NDP and which are referred to in some of the subsequent sections of this document.

Question 1a: Which of the settlement boundary options do you prefer? (Please RANK the options in order of preference: 1 for most preferred, 3 for least preferred)	
Option A: (Figure 1): No settlement boundary.	
Option B: (Figure 2): Settlement boundary including existing and all currently approved permitted developments.	
Option C: (Figure 3): As Option B plus protection for the Riverside Park and areas for recreation and employment south-west of Little Marcle Road. This is the option recommended by Ledbury Town Council, Herefordshire Council and our professional consultants.	

Question 1b: Do you have any suggestions of other areas to be added within the boundary and why? Enter your suggestions below.

2. Employment and Recreation

Land for new businesses

- 2.1 The NDP will include a ‘brownfield first’ policy by which is meant that vacant industrial land and business premises may be considered for a wide range of future uses as appropriate, including commercial, public utility/facilities and other uses.

It is also proposed that the NDP should seek to allocate additional land for employment, so that the town can grow in a balanced and sustainable way. In this way out-

commuting to work, which is expected to result from the increase in population arising from housing development, can be reduced.

Herefordshire Council indicates that around 12 hectares of land for new businesses should be located to the south of Little Marcle Road. Its analysis of the landscape surrounding the town suggests that this is the location which is least sensitive. There are already business premises in that location.

However, the location of the additional employment land is not defined, and currently there is no mechanism agreed that might deliver it. For the town to grow in a sustainable way, promoting local employment would reduce the need to travel elsewhere to work. The opportunity exists to utilise the 'Market Town's Economic Investment Plan' project to try to bring forward employment land in this location.

An assessment of potential employment sites has also identified a limited number of smaller sites in locations that are less sensitive or could be screened to a satisfactory degree. These might also contribute towards providing local employment across a range of businesses, including tourism.

Land for playing fields

- 2.2 There are no specific proposals for recreation in the current plan although there is a policy to support new or improved community facilities for the youth of the area subject to a number of criteria. Ledbury and District Sports Federation and its constituent clubs have identified the need for further playing fields, especially in order to meet the needs of the adult and youth football clubs.

This need is also identified in the Herefordshire Council 2015 Playing Fields Strategy. In addition, Sport England will only support a plan in which youth and adult facilities are combined.

The assessment for both the Ledbury Town FC (adults) and Ledbury Swifts FC (juniors) is that at least 6 hectares of additional land may be required. Funding and delivery opportunities have been explored and the expansion in the vicinity of the rugby club is favoured.

The need to provide for these sports is seen as one of the main purposes for the review of the NDP and potential sites have been explored.

The preferred option is also to locate playing fields to meet the current needs to the south of Little Marcle Road, where combined facilities for adult and junior football will be supported by Sport England.

Question 2a: Do you agree that providing land to expand provision for sport is a high priority for this update? (Please tick one answer choice.)

Strongly agree	Agree	No Opinion	Disagree	Strongly disagree

Question 2b: To get support from Sport England, any new football facility needs

to be combined to provide for both adult and junior football so they can benefit from shared facilities. Do you agree that this should be on the indicated site off Little Marcle Road? (See Figure 3) (Please tick one answer choice.)

Agree

No Opinion

Disagree

Question 2c: Are there other recreational or leisure needs for which land should be identified? (Please write your comments in the box below.)

Accommodating these employment and sports needs

2.3 It is important to show that in accommodating any playing fields we will not restrict the ability to meet the Core Strategy requirement for employment land. Land south of the UBL factory is expected to make a major contribution towards the 12ha required. However, promoting a range of sites to the south of Little Marcle Road with a flexible approach in terms of jobs that might be encouraged while protecting local amenity may enable both the requirements to be met.

This would also enable advantage to be taken of recent changes to categories covering commercial, business and services uses to widen employment opportunities without having a significant adverse effect on residential amenity or the landscape. The relocation of the auction building from the town centre to the site on the Ross Road is an example of such flexibility.

2.4 A similar opportunity is afforded by land to the south of the Full Pitcher roundabout where there are currently a number of businesses and a sensitive development between these and dwellings to the east might mitigate some of the noise that is currently generated in this location.

The current NDP refers to the establishment of a tri-service facility near the bypass and although the emergency services have no immediate plans to co-locate they welcomed the reference.

Land in this vicinity may offer an opportunity that would benefit emergency services through vehicles avoiding having to travel on the more congested roads within the town to locations outside.

Similarly, there is a suggestion that the promotion of additional hotel accommodation on the periphery of the town would add to tourism potential. The current NDP policy might be expanded to support additional hotel accommodation outside the urban area. A location on Ledbury bypass may offer the opportunity to diversify the range of hotel accommodation on offer.

2.5 Should it be possible to bring forward a number of sites, these might contribute towards the 12 hectares required to the south of Little Marcle Road. It would have to be shown that such development would not adversely affect residential amenity, that it would

support the enhancement of green infrastructure in this vicinity, and care would be needed to show that any proposal would not have a significant adverse effect on views from or to the Malvern Hills AONB or Wall Hills Camp.

Question 2d: Given that Ledbury is required by the Core strategy to provide 12 hectares (approx. 30 acres) of new employment land to the south of Little Marcle Road, would you agree that:				
i) More than one site should be considered to meet this requirement? (Please tick one answer choice.)				
Strongly agree	Agree	No Opinion	Disagree	Strongly disagree
ii) Land by the Full Pitcher roundabout and adjacent to the new housing development (Hawk Rise) should be considered for employment, restricted to uses suitable near a residential area? (Please tick one answer choice.)				
Strongly agree	Agree	No Opinion	Disagree	Strongly disagree
iii) Smaller areas elsewhere on the edge of the town should be identified to accommodate new or expanded businesses? (Please tick one answer choice.)				
Strongly agree	Agree	No Opinion	Disagree	Strongly disagree

3. Land North of the Viaduct and Railway Line

- 3.1 A large part of this area is proposed for housing with some employment land within the Core Strategy, which also sets out development requirements in some detail. This includes, among other matters, facilitation of a section of the Hereford to Gloucester canal and a new park linking to existing walks into and around the town to the south of the viaduct and Ledbury allotments further to the north. There may also be an opportunity to preserve the option for vehicular access to the viaduct site off the Hereford Road roundabout. A review would need to consider whether any possible route would be practical and permissible in planning terms and this is considered unlikely to be deliverable in any timescale covered by this plan.

Question 3a: Should the option to create a vehicular access off the Hereford Road to the viaduct housing development be preserved for the future? (Please tick one answer choice.)

Strongly agree	Agree	No Opinion	Disagree	Strongly disagree

Ledbury Railway Station

3.2 Ledbury’s location on a railway line provides the opportunity to promote this more sustainable mode of travel and connect with other centres of employment and education. However, it is restricted in terms of safe access and car parking. Both Herefordshire Council’s Transport Strategy and the current plan indicate support for improvements to the accessibility and facilities available at the railway station, including car parking. It has not yet been possible to deliver these improvements although adjacent land has been submitted for assessment as potential land for employment. Benefits in terms of improved access to the railway station are highlighted within the submission.

Question 3b: Do you support the provision of ground level eastbound platform access, improved platform services and additional car parking at the railway station? (Please tick one answer choice.)

Strongly agree	Agree	No Opinion	Disagree	Strongly disagree

Please add any comments you have here.

4. Supporting the Town Centre

Ledbury Town Centre

4.1 The Core Strategy seeks to increase the vitality and viability of Ledbury town centre, especially through supporting retail, commercial, leisure, cultural and tourism proposals and resisting proposals outside the centre where this would have an adverse effect on these qualities. The only definition of Ledbury town centre is found in Herefordshire’s Unitary Development Plan 2007 (UDP) which is shown in red on Figure 4. but is now out of date. It is proposed that a new redefinition of the town centre be considered.

The alternatives are (see Figure 4):

- to use the old UDP boundary giving a concentrated town centre and a defensible retail core (red)

- to extend the town centre to include either or both the supermarkets (the Co-op and Tesco) and adjacent shops and businesses which lie just outside the UDP town centre boundary. It has been shown that footfall from each of these supermarkets supports the town centre (Tesco area in green, Co-op area in blue)
- to add in Lawnside which includes two important town centre facilities - the swimming pool and the community centre - as well as the associated car park (purple).

The advantage of using the old UDP boundary is that it concentrates footfall within a relatively small area and this can be attractive to shoppers. It also supports the character of the town with its many historic buildings. However, disadvantages include restricting the ability to attract new types of shops and other premises to reflect current retail, leisure and other changes, and limiting footfall to a smaller area. On balance it is proposed that the town centre boundary should be re-defined with several options to be considered. The current NDP defines primary frontages (mainly food, restaurants, clothing, drinking establishments and household shops) and secondary frontages (in addition to the above, including hot food takeaways and businesses), regulating the uses considered appropriate within these (see Figure 5). However, there is a new 2020 system of defining types of retail premises which needs to be reflected in any frontage definitions.

It is proposed that the distinction between primary and secondary frontages is removed in order to encourage a more flexible approach to planning the future of the town centre. Changes in patterns of retailing and associated town centre uses are occurring rapidly and there may need to be a more flexible approach about what uses will retain Ledbury's attractiveness as both a retail and tourist destination.

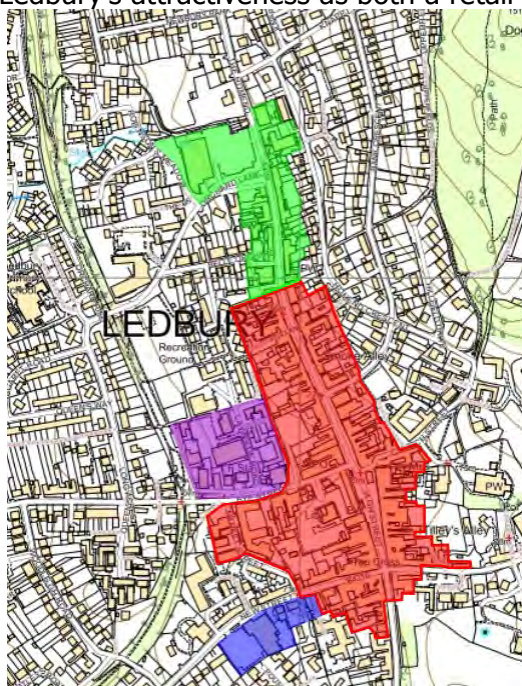


Figure 4: Possible Town Centre definition options

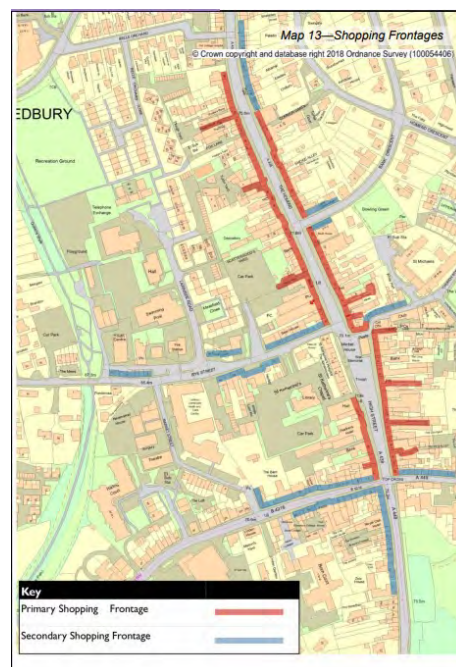


Figure 5: Existing frontages

Question 4a) Which areas do you think should be added to the currently defined town centre (shown in red on map Figure 4)? (Please tick your selection(s) and add any suggestions you may have about areas to be added in the box below)

Red Only	and + Blue	and + Green	and + Purple	No opinion
Comment/other areas which should be included in the town centre and why.				
Question 4b) Given the changes in retail type definitions, do you agree that, in planning terms, there should be no differentiation between primary and secondary shop frontages and that shops, restaurants and cafes, drinking establishments, financial and professional services, and hot food takeaways should be allowed within this combined frontage? (See Figure 5) (Please tick one answer choice.)				
Strongly agree	Agree	No Opinion	Disagree	Strongly disagree

Town Centre regeneration and community services

- 4.2 The area comprising Lawnside and Market Street, on the edge of the town's shopping streets, is one of mixed uses where there are pressures for redevelopment and these may be added to through the need to improve healthcare facilities. It is suggested that a comprehensive approach is taken to defining how redevelopments might proceed to enable improved health service facilities, provision of other uses supporting the town centre, its attractiveness to visitors is increased, and the enhancement of the conservation area's character and appearance. An option is to retain the current approach and allow any development within Lawnside to proceed on an ad-hoc basis.

Question 4c: Should we propose a co-ordinated approach to the regeneration of Lawnside and Market Street to benefit the town centre, its conservation area and community services? (Please tick one answer choice.)				
Strongly agree	Agree	No Opinion	Disagree	Strongly disagree

Health and other emergency services

- 4.3 The current NDP contains a policy to support proposals which improve, or increase the capacity of and access to medical, dental and care facilities, by expansion or relocation. Since that plan was prepared, Ledbury Health Partnership has formed comprising the two former general practices serving the town and its hinterland together. Its current accommodation is fragmented and in the view of Ledbury Health Partnership, while it provides for present needs, it will not be suitable in the future. It would not be able to

meet expected population growth and is unable to accommodate the range of other NHS and associated services expected for a modern health service practice.

The benefits of the 'joined up' and holistic approach to health care services for the community would be enhanced further through improved and extended accommodation. Options are being explored, although Ledbury Town Council would prefer to retain facilities within the town centre if that is possible as this would provide easiest access for all and support the town's economy. This would not be to the exclusion of other options should that not be possible.

Question 4d: Should the NDP promote the retention of health facilities in the town centre if it is at all possible? (Please tick one answer choice.)				
Strongly agree	Agree	No Opinion	Disagree	Strongly disagree

5. Green Infrastructure

5.1 Green infrastructure comprises the network formed by green spaces and other green features within and surrounding the town including, among others, parks, open spaces, playing fields, woodlands, orchards, rivers and streams, street trees and allotments. Current NDP policies afford protection to some green infrastructure elements such as woodlands surrounding the town and a number of features that contribute towards biodiversity.

The neighbourhood's green infrastructure

5.2 The approach now being suggested is to maintain, enhance and encourage further natural features within the series of green corridors (referenced LedLSC) and enhancement zones (referenced LedEZ) identified in Herefordshire Council's Green Infrastructure Strategy which is a supporting document to the Core Strategy.

Local Strategic Corridors (LSC) are linear green spaces linking local sites and ensuring connectivity of green assets between and within communities. Local Enhancement Zones (LEZ) are areas where green infrastructure is required to benefit the community and environment.

Some of the corridors are associated with town-wide pedestrian and cycle routes. Further work undertaken for the review has highlighted additional corridors and enhancement zones together with additional measures. The proposed new corridors and zones are shown in Figure 7 (current zones shown in Figure 6).

5.3 Objectives for these areas will be set out in the NDP for adoption by the Town Council and local community groups and should also be met if and when development is proposed within the areas. These objectives should strengthen those features contributing to the character and ecological value surrounding the whole of the town's built-up area including, where possible, measures to mitigate the effects of climate change. The areas and measures comprise:

- **Local Strategic Corridor LedLSC1** passes through the town along the line of the former Ledbury-Gloucester railway – called the Town Trail. The green corridor should be retained and enhanced where possible, including protecting open spaces in its vicinity.
- **Local Strategic Corridor LedLSC2** incorporates not only the Riverside Walk, but also greening along the edges of the western leg of Ledbury bypass and the adjacent sports grounds. An extension to or widening of the corridor to link to Walls Hill Camp and its surrounding woodland is proposed because of its importance to local heritage and the setting of the town. Extensions to the north and south would also ensure connectivity along the River Leadon and the proposed route for the reinstatement of a section of the Hereford to Gloucester canal.
- **Local Strategic Corridor LedLSC3** stretches out from the centre of the town to the north-east to link with Dog Wood. The green spaces within the town's built-up area, such as the churchyard and the large Walled Garden, are important elements within this corridor. The corridor's extension to include Frith Wood would be consistent with objectives for public access to the nearby woodlands.
- **Local Strategic Corridor LedLSC4** is an example of what can be achieved in terms of connected green space within residential and associated areas and which residents can add to through wildlife friendly gardens. This corridor runs through New Mills Way to Leadon Way and the Town Trail. It brings together significant green spaces, verges and stands of trees within a residential area which residents can add to through wildlife friendly gardens.
- **A new Local Strategic Corridor LedLSC5** is proposed incorporating locally important parks and gardens (including Ledbury Park and Underdown) along the east of the town and a wildlife corridor based on the stream and public right of way to the south of the town.

The new area would not only look to protect important landscapes, but strengthen the connectivity and transition between the upland ecological network defined for Malvern Hills AONB in its Management Plan and the lowland valley of the River Leadon. It would also provide a green gap between Ledbury and Parkway.

- **Local Enhancement Zone LedLEZ1** is where considerable new development is proposed in the Core Strategy on the Viaduct site where 625 new houses are anticipated to be built. Herefordshire Council's Green Infrastructure Strategy encourages a range of actions to enhance the area that borders Wellington Heath parish including creating new paths, other environmental measures including wetland features, and the restoration of a section of the canal.

Wellington Heath NDP identifies a settlement green gap¹ to prevent, among others, coalescence between its settlement and Ledbury. It also indicates that a footpath and safe cycleway might be developed within its area to help link the two settlements, and for screening to be used to mitigate the effects of development and protect the landscape setting of Malvern Hills AONB. The transitional landscape between upland and valley in this location needs to be recognised for its

¹ See Policy WH3 at <https://wellingtonheathpc.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/10/WHNDP-v15.11.pdf>

importance to the setting of the AONB to which the zone might be linked by an extension to the east.

The enhancement requirements for this area should also protect this green gap. A complementary policy setting out the additional enhancement measures which ought to accompany any development within this area should be included in the NDP. Natural flood control measures to reduce the flooding effects of the new development upon the River Leadon should be introduced, including measures to benefit wildlife.

- **Local Enhancement Zone LedLEZ2** is an area where change is underway despite being identified as an important sensitive landscape by a planning inspector in terms of its relationship to the Malvern Hills AONB and Ledbury's setting. The extension of the enhancement zone along the Dymock Road to incorporate the land identified as sensitive and enhancement measures that might be incorporated within those parts where development is likely, should be included in the NDP.
- A new **Local Enhancement Zone LedLEZ3** is proposed on the higher ground at the eastern end of Ledbury bypass and south-west of the Gloucester roundabout that was identified as a sensitive landscape in the current plan and that would be a backcloth to new development that is under construction. The new zone would also create a green gap between Ledbury Town and Parkway and would include a new path and cycleway between the two communities.

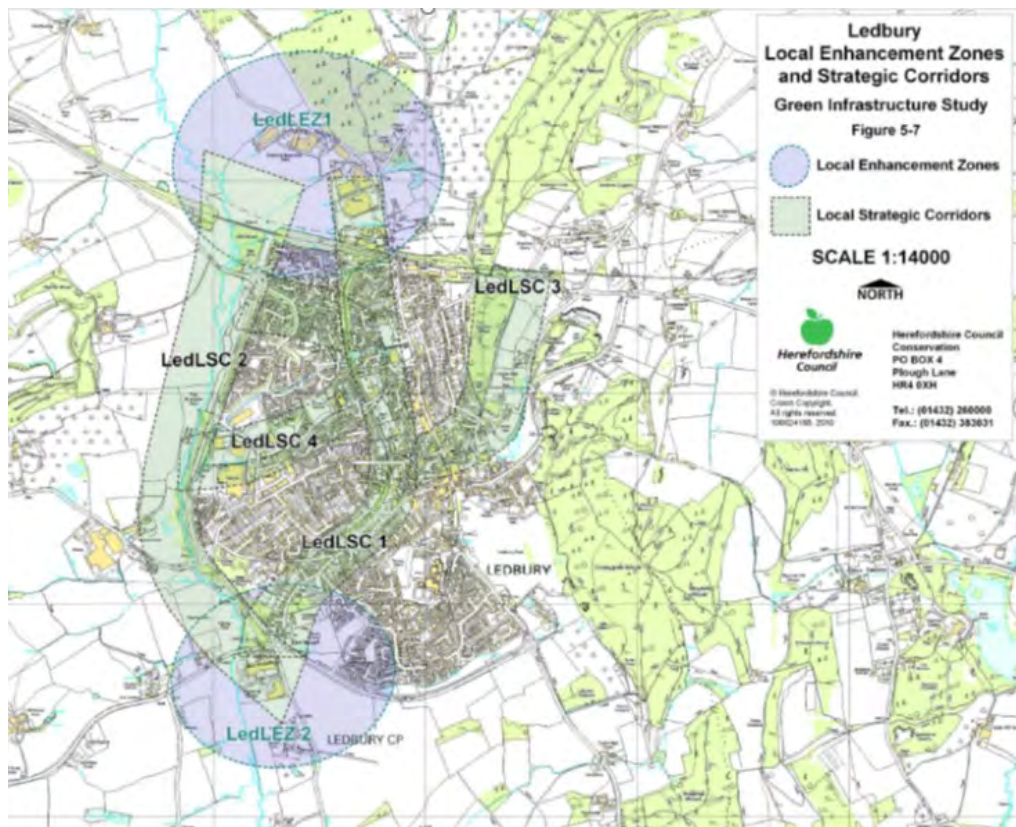


Figure 6: Current Herefordshire Council Local Strategic Corridors and Local Enhancement Zones

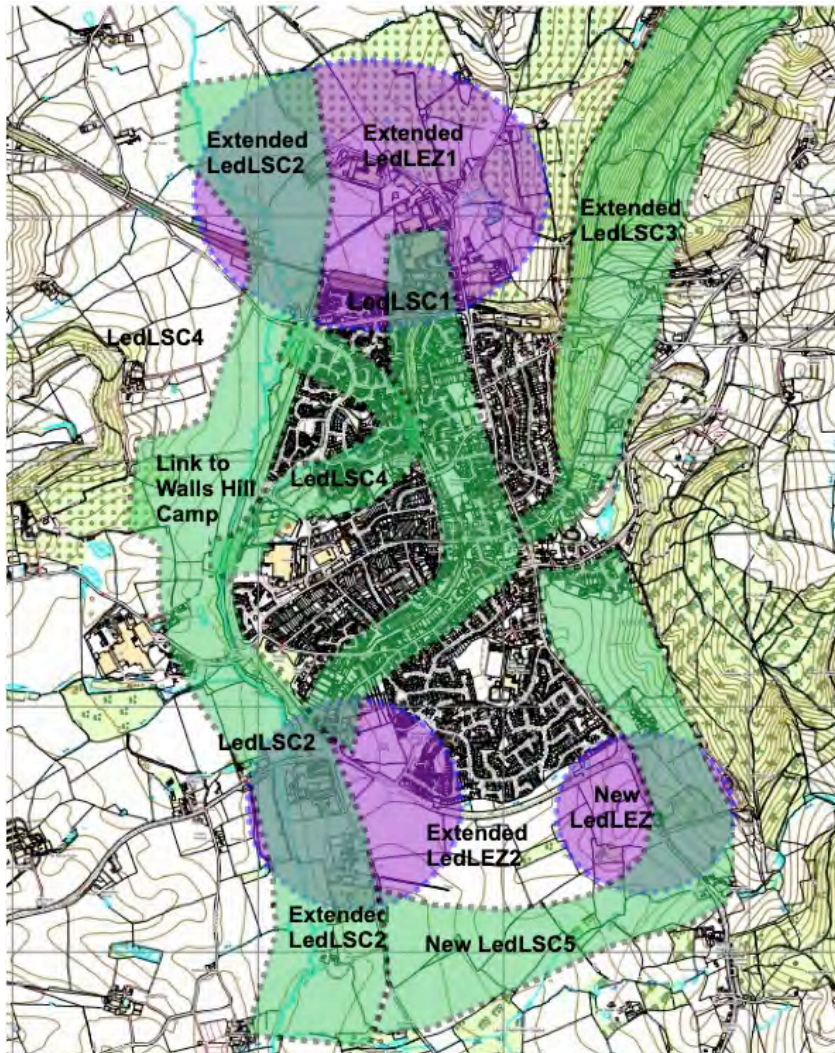


Figure 7: Proposed additional Local Strategic Corridors and Local Enhancement Zones

Question 5a: Do you agree with the following proposals:				
<p>i) That the new and extended corridors and enhancement zones identified in Figure 7 should be added to the existing green infrastructure identified in the Herefordshire Green infrastructure report (Figure 6). (Please tick one answer choice.)</p>				
Strongly agree	Agree	No Opinion	Disagree	Strongly disagree
<p>ii) That within those areas green infrastructure should be protected, enhanced and extended where possible. (Please tick one answer choice.)</p>				
Strongly agree	Agree	No Opinion	Disagree	Strongly disagree

Green spaces within Ledbury

- 5.4 The elements and features that form the corridors and enhancement zones need to be protected and opportunities taken to promote positive measures to increase their extent, including net gains in biodiversity, where development is proposed. Not all the important green and open spaces requiring protection are included within these defined areas. Small and medium sized green and open spaces can add to local amenity and provide valuable wildlife refuges. The map below shows these, including that along Leadon Way. Many of these were identified as protected area in the former Herefordshire Unitary Development Plan. Different levels of protection may, however, apply - for example playing fields may be replaced with the same or better facilities elsewhere. It is also proposed that where appropriate and opportunity arises, the creation of community gardens and allotments should be considered.

<p>Question 5b: Do you agree that all the green and open spaces shown in Figure 8 should generally be afforded protection as contributing to green infrastructure within and surrounding the town? Can you suggest any additional green spaces? (Please tick one answer choice and put your suggestions for additional green spaces in the box below)</p>				
Strongly agree	Agree	No Opinion	Disagree	Strongly disagree
<p>Comment/other possible green spaces:</p>				
<p>Question 5c: Do you agree that allotments and/or community gardens should be encouraged? Can you suggest a suitable location for them? (Please tick one answer and write suggestions in the box below)</p>				
Strongly agree	Agree	No Opinion	Disagree	Strongly disagree
<p>Comment/other possible locations for allotments or community gardens:</p>				

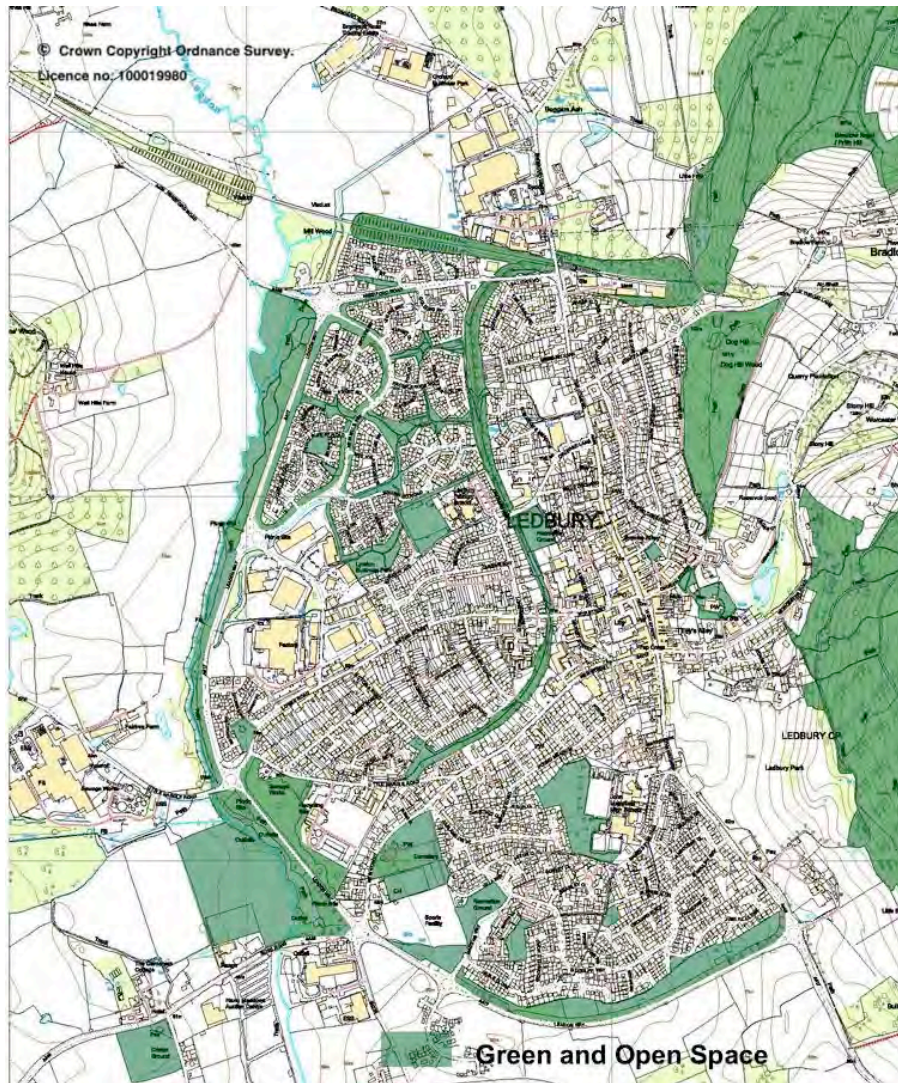


Figure 8: Green and open spaces to be protected.

Footpaths, cycleways and Public Rights of Way

- 5.5 Footpaths, cycleways and public rights of way are important elements within the corridors defined through and surrounding the town, especially those associated with green spaces and corridors. Many of the latter lead out from its built-up area, enabling access to woodlands and other natural green spaces in the surrounding countryside, especially upon the Malvern Hills. There remains the ambition to add further to these by safeguarding the route of the Herefordshire to Gloucestershire Canal so that a restoration project might lead to the reopening of the link at some time in the future and with the tow path providing pedestrian and cycle access to neighbouring areas.

Facilitating access to parts of the town and its surrounding villages and hamlets along green corridors supports three objectives of promoting health and wellbeing, retaining and increasing biodiversity, and mitigating the effects of climate change. Encouraging improved links to the wider network will also benefit both physical and mental health.

Question 5d: Can you suggest any footpaths, cycleways or other connections that could be improved or created to benefit residents and access to green space and wildlife? (Please write your comments in the box below.)

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Children's play areas

5.6 Children's play areas can provide access to nature as part of their design and contribution to wellbeing. Herefordshire Council's Play Facilities Study 2012 identified 9 children's play areas within the town. All but one of these were in the northern part of its built-up area with only one to the south of Bridge Street. Circumstances may have changed slightly since that study with specific provision being made to serve new housing development.

However, even if these were to serve a wider area, most are to the south of Leadon Way which is a major barrier to access by children. No opportunities to increase children's play area provision within the southern part of the town have been identified. It is proposed to enable provision of additional play facilities in areas of need if and when opportunities are identified.

Question 5e: Do you think more or improved children's play areas are needed and if so, where?

(Please write your comments in the box below, including what type of play area is needed e.g. open space, play equipment and for what age range.)

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6. Design and the Environment

Design guidance

6.1 Ledbury Town Council has a Design Guide (2018) and it hoped in the future to update and put it to community consultation for approval as an adopted planning document. However, given the time involved in such a detailed exercise, and the subsequent delay that would be incurred to defining the settlement boundary, a design guide is not proposed at this stage. It is nevertheless important to integrate existing design preferences into policies in the body of the NDP. This will be done on a wide range of design issues, as well as cross-referencing to the National Model Design Code, which sets the framework for design policies. In addition, policies should be updated to encourage sustainable development, measures to mitigate and adapt to climate change and the promotion of active travel.

Question 6a: Do you agree that the NDP should include policies covering as wide a range of design matters as possible? (Please tick one answer choice.)				
Strongly agree	Agree	No Opinion	Disagree	Strongly disagree
Question 6b: Do you agree that the NDP should include policies to support sustainable development to mitigate the climate and ecological emergency? (Please tick one answer choice.)				
Strongly agree	Agree	No Opinion	Disagree	Strongly disagree

7. Other Matters

7.1 The NDP may include a limited number of other matters although it is not intended to encompass a major review. Herefordshire Council has started a review of its Core Strategy although this may take some time before it is complete. This may identify further development needs for the town requiring a more significant review of the NDP.

Question 7a: Bearing in mind that this is an NDP revision, do you have any other comments on the specific topics covered above or any other issues you wish to raise? (Please write your comment in the box below)

Question 7b: Please write your postcode in the box below. (This does not identify any individual but is simply to help in analysis so we can assess the degree of response by post code and if they are relatively equally spread across all Ledbury parish post codes; it helps us to see which areas of the Parish have responded and where greater engagement needs to take place.)